

# NCES DOVE UPDATE

DATA ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION

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A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR THE NCES TECHNICAL REVIEW PANEL (TRP) ON VOCATIONAL EDUCATION



## KEEPING CURRENT

To keep up with the changing nature of vocational education, NCES periodically revises its systems for classifying vocational programs at the secondary and postsecondary levels. In this issue, we report on some findings from the new taxonomy for undergraduate education as well as our plans to revise the high school taxonomy.

### Undergraduate Enrollments

As described in the April 2003 *DOVE Newsletter*, NCES recently revised its taxonomy for postsecondary education, classifying all undergraduate majors as either academic or career majors. At the subbaccalaureate level, career majors are considered vocational. The recently published *Issue Brief*, "Undergraduate Enrollments in Academic, Career, and Vocational Education" (NCES 2004-018), presents findings on enrollments as of 1999-2000 according to this new taxonomy. See the Voted Fast Fact at right.

### High School Coursetaking

NCES last revised its Secondary School Taxonomy (SST) in 1998. The revised SST identified 18 high school occupational program areas. Participation in these programs was described in *Trends in High School Vocational/Technical Coursetaking: 1982-1998* (NCES 2003-025) and in *Public High School Graduates Who Participated in Vocational/Technical Education: 1982-1998* (NCES 2003-024). In recent years, however, practitioners have reported changes in the nature of high school vocational programs that are not well-captured in the current taxonomy. To better reflect the current nature of high school vocational coursetaking, NCES is preparing to undertake a revision of the vocational portion of the SST.

One possible starting place for a new classification of vocational programs is the 16 career clusters proposed by the National Association of State Directors of Career Technical Education Consortium (NASDCTEC). These include the following:

- Agriculture, food, & natural resources
- Architecture & construction
- Arts, A/V technology & communications
- Business, management & administration
- Education & training
- Finance
- Government & public administration
- Health sciences
- Hospitality & tourism
- Human services
- Information technology
- Law, public safety & security
- Manufacturing
- Marketing, sales & service
- Science, technology, engineering & mathematics
- Transportation, distribution & logistics

An informal investigation into implementation of the career clusters, however, found that state practices varied widely. The most common career clusters appeared to include agriculture, food, & natural resources; health sciences; marketing, sales & service; and business, management & administration. On the other hand, less common clusters included government & public administration; finance; law, public safety & security; and science, technology, engineering & mathematics. Moreover, states ranged from reporting between 4 and 23 different vocational programs or clusters.

In order to consider appropriate revisions to its high school vocational program classification, NCES plans to convene a one-day meeting of experts in conjunction with the next summer meeting of the DOVE Technical Review Panel (TRP).

## VOCED FAST FACT

As of 1999-2000, about two-thirds (66.2 percent) of degree-seeking undergraduates reported majoring in a career field. Specifically, 60.7 percent of baccalaureate students and 71.2 percent of subbaccalaureate students reported having a career major. (Baccalaureate students include those seeking a bachelor's degree, while subbaccalaureate students include those seeking either an associate's degree or postsecondary certificate.)

*SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Issue Brief, "Undergraduate Enrollments in Academic, Career, and Vocational Education" NCES 2004-018, prepared by Lisa Hudson of NCES and Linda Shafer of the Education Statistical Services Institute. Washington, D.C.: February 2004.*



## SUMMER 2004 DOVE TRP MEETING

The next annual DOVE TRP meeting will be held in July or August of 2004. The one-day meeting of experts to discuss revisions to the vocational portion of the SST may be convened one day before the TRP meeting. Interested TRP members will be asked to attend. We will begin to plan for these meetings in March, when we will contact TRP members to propose possible meeting dates.